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Macroeconomic policy questions: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries; outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Letter dated 2 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the ministerial communiqué adopted at the Fourth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries, held in New York on 30 September 2003, and the landlocked developing countries communiqué issued by the ministers of landlocked developing countries attending the fifth session of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Cancun, Mexico, on 13 September 2003 (see annexes I and II).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as official documents of the General Assembly under agenda items 91 (c) and 91 (f).

(*Signed*) Alounkéo **Kittikhoun**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries

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Annex I to the letter dated 2 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué
of the Fourth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries (New York, 30 September 2003)

We, the Ministers of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), meeting here at the Headquarters of the United Nations in the sideline of the 58th session of the General Assembly,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1] in which heads of State and Government recognized the particular needs and problems of the landlocked developing countries and urged both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their particular development needs and to help them to overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems, and resolved to create an environment, at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels alike, that is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty,

Recalling also the General Assembly resolution 56/180 of 20 December 2001 and General Assembly resolution 57/242 of 20 December 2002,

Recalling also the Ministerial Communiqués adopted at the Annual Ministerial Meetings of Landlocked Developing Countries convened in 2000, 2001 and 2002,

1. *Welcome* with satisfaction the outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation. In this regard, we *commend* the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for providing the highly efficient preparations for and organization of the International Ministerial Conference as well as its effective mobilization of resources and coordination efforts of the United Nations system organizations and other relevant international organizations. We appreciate the organizations and bodies of the United Nations System, including UNCTAD and the regional commissions, the international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank and the international community for providing substantive, financial and technical support to the preparatory process and organization of the Conference.

2. *Express* our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Kazakhstan for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of the International Ministerial Conference in Almaty.

[1] See resolution 55/2.

3. *Highly commend* the Lao People's Democratic Republic as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries for the successful and effective chairmanship in promoting the cause of LLDCs, in particular during the Almaty Conference.

4. *Warmly welcome* the admission of the Republic of Moldova to the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries and believe that this would further strengthen the Group of LLDCs.

5. *Emphasize* that the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries constitutes a breakthrough document containing specific actions in five priority areas to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries. The Almaty Programme of Action will be implemented through genuine partnerships among landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners, including the private sector.

6. *Stress* the role of international, regional and sub-regional organizations in the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and *request* the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to ensure efficient and effective follow-up to and implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. We *appeal to* United Nations bodies and entities and other relevant international organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Regional Economic Commissions, the World Bank as well as the World Trade Organization, the World Customs Organization, to participate fully and actively in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action that should start immediately.

7. *Acknowledge* the importance of the forth-coming High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 16-19 December 2003, and the special needs of LLDCs and the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action should be duly addressed at the Conference.

8. *Request also* the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to undertake wide-scale advocacy work in order to raise international awareness at the international, regional, sub-regional, bilateral and national levels of the outcome of the Almaty International Ministerial Conference and its timely implementation.

9. *Call upon* donor countries to provide adequate financial and technical assistance for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

10. *Emphasize* the importance of cooperative arrangements between landlocked and transit developing countries.

11. *Stress* the importance of the review process for the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. The periodicity of the review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action by the General Assembly should be consistent with the review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Therefore, we *urge* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to present his progress report on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to the General Assembly on an annual basis.

12. *Note* with regret the failure of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Cancun and *call* for the resumption of trade talks as soon as possible so as to make the world market fair and open that would be in the interests of both rich and poor countries.

13. *Strongly endorse* the Ministerial Communiqué adopted at the Meeting of Ministers for Trade of Landlocked Developing Countries convened on 13 September 2003 on the sideline of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun.

14. In this regard, *deeply appreciate* the efforts made by the Government of Paraguay in coordinating concerted efforts made by the Ministers for Trade of the Landlocked Developing Countries at the Cancun Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization. The Communiqué should be distributed to all Member States and relevant international organizations.

15. *Agree* to further strengthen our concerted efforts in order to achieve the recognition by the WTO that the main causes of the marginalization of landlocked developing countries from the international trading system is high trade transaction costs and excessive transport costs create for them a major effective barrier to foreign markets. Most importantly our concerted actions should be further strengthened to ensure that the current negotiations on market access for agricultural and non-agricultural goods give particular attention to products of special interest to landlocked developing countries. In this regard, we *invite* the Government of Paraguay to continue to serve as coordinator of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries within the framework of WTO on issues related to market access.

16. *Request* the Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries to take necessary action to make the present Communiqué an official document of the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Annex II to the letter dated 2 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES COMMUNIQUE

Afganistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Botswana, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Malawi, Mali, Mongolia, Paraguay, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Cancun, Mexico – 13 September 2003

1. The Ministers of the Landlocked Developing countries, attending the World Trade Organization Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference, with the firm purpose of jointly working with the WTO Members, agree to establish a substantial reform of the multilateral trade system, with the objective of achieving more fair and equitable trade rules, taking into special consideration the peculiar situation of the Landlocked Developing countries.

2. The Landlocked Developing countries, as small and vulnerable economies, are confronted by unique geographical situation, that impart higher transport and transaction costs to their goods and services, limiting their competitiveness. In this context, efficient trade facilitation and effective preferential market access for their products in the international markets, are priorities for those countries, that calls for closer cooperation of the international community and, particularly, of the WTO Members.

3. The recent International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation in the context of the United Nations, held at Almaty, Kazakhstan, on August 28 and 29, has recommended for consideration by the WTO the following critical issues that will alleviate the difficulties faced by their goods and services today:

   a. The fulfillment of paragraph 35 of the Doha Declaration, that mandates the WTO General Council to review the work programme and make recommendations for action to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference to address the issues related to trade of the small and vulnerable economies and their full integration into the multilateral trading system.

b. Trade is an important engine for economic development. There is therefore need for special provisions to ease the handicaps and enable a greater participation of Landlocked Developing countries in international trade, which is crucial for their development prospects.
c. The significance of taking into consideration the request presented by Landlocked Developing countries that the current negotiations on market access for agricultural and non-agricultural goods and services should consider giving free access on tariffs and quotas for all products originating from Landlocked Developing countries.
d. The need to provide effective trade facilitation to the Landlocked Developing countries, which could expedite the customs procedures at border-crossing and through transit countries, on the way to the sea ports.
e. The accession of Landlocked Developing countries to the WTO should be further accelerated, taking into account their need for special and differentiated treatment regarding their accession.

4. We welcome the accession of the Kingdom of Nepal to the World Trade Organization.

5. Finally, the Ministers request here in Cancun that a special work programme and Development Box be established under the auspices of the WTO General Council to address the issues related to the trade of Landlocked Developing countries, particularly on trade facilitation, transport, full market access, and financial assistance and capacity building.

- **The Landlocked Developing countries include a group of Developing Countries, Least Developed Countries and Countries with Economies in Transition.**